/19 cont./

844 565 the bed of the expectant mother a cord is suspended from the ceiling, which she can grasp during the severe pains and spasms of childbirth. It is indecent for her to let her moans and screams reach the ears of her parents-in-law; she must staunchly bear her sufferings so as not to lose their respect forever. At last the child is delivered. The birth of a boy brings more joy to the [842] mother than the birth of a girl, as it gives her more respect and honor in the eyes of society, but she is not particularly saddened by the birth of a daughter either, for it still serves as proof of her fertility. The newborn child is left in the care of the wet nurse [608] [853] (the wife of the foster father), and the female relatives congratulate the new mother on the happy /20/ outcome of the delivery. The mother, too, is happy, and most of all, of course, because with the passing of the baby into the care of others she herself will soon recover and, free from caring for it, can more easily preserve her beauty and freshness of face. In a few days her husband returns and in his turn congratulates her on the delivery of her child (1).

1. Cf. the excellent article, "Abkhazia," by K. Machavariani in the newspaper Iveriia, 1884, No. 275.

608 565 On the day set for the departure of the wet nurse with the newborn baby, the parents give a banquet and give her the materials for a dress, for underwear, and for all the appurtenances for the child's cradle, a copper kettle to bathe it in, and other small articles.

From this day on the foster mother receives the honorary title of anadzdzei (nurse, foster mother), and both she and her husband, the abadzdzei (foster father), are held in universal respect; upon its entry into the house of the foster father and mother, the baby is recognized as a ward (akhupha) of the family to which the foster father belongs.

The foster parents cherish the child in due fashion and maintain him in comfort and contentment. After two or three [431] years the child is taken to its parents, along with presents consisting of one or two bulls, a goat, capons, wine, bread, etc.

[770 cont.]

755 might leave. As soon as the afflicted person is able, he himself goes to the water with a prayer-woman; there he kneels and
[782] offers up a hen to the mother of the waters, a rooster to her husband, and a candle to each of them and to her female servant (Abza 'avabzatšav = benefactress, intercessor). The woman prays and strokes the sick person on the back for "deliverance" (azatí).

If someone suffers from jaundice or debility, [771] the "irreproachable" elders lead him to the river, lay his clothing, silver articles, etc. on both banks, and make a bridge of twisted yarn over the river; the prayer-woman then circles the sick person with a doll and prays to the rainbow in the name of the Eliap'ši, to the mother of the waters, and to her husband. She
[784] casts into the water pieces of the food that was brought along: roasted chickens, tongue-shaped flat cakes, etc., and she allows the doll to float downstream in a gourd with a burning candle, while she prays that the goddess amuse herself with it rather than with the sick person. Finally she gives the latter "deliverance," and he may not look back on the way home (cf. p. 924 f. [untranslated]).

231 789 When rinderpest struck, the Kemirkehe used to dig a tunnel in a steep river-bank and in the middle of this a pit in which they fastened a black cat with a silver belt. They covered the pit with boards and earth, ignited a fire on top by rubbing two sticks together, and drove the cattle through the river and the tunnel, to the accompaniment of the priests' litany. Afterwards the cat was freed.

• 842 The above-mentioned threefold prayer at the water is aimed at fertility when one "leads to the water" a young woman for the first time, during which an egg is thrown in, and, in the 844 case of a woman in childbed, food for the infant.

787 The Abkhaz read signs for future events, for a favorable or unfavorable outcome for undertakings, from the stars, from
[831] the form of the moon, from meeting certain animals or human beings, and also, in the manner of the Tatars, from the cracks in a sheep's shoulder-blade that has been cast into the fire (see Vol. II, p. 325).